

Health Tracts.—No. 1.

DOSING AND DRUGGING,

OR

DESTROYING BY INCHES.

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DOSING AND DRUGGING.

THE terms dosing and drugging, are here used in their common acceptation. By dosing is meant, simply, the administration of medicine in portions or doses, larger or smaller; whereas by drugging is meant the custom of tincturing with drugs, things which, in themselves, are not necessarily medicinal. The object of the following article, is to exhibit the many sore evils which result from that indiscriminate every-day dosing and drugging, which so extensively prevails; and which in civilized communities like our own, is sincerely believed to be the means of destroying more lives than famine, pestilence or the sword, if not more than all of these three foes of human happiness combined. The subject has been partially discussed in our former volumes, but never to the extent which its importance demands.

Anything which mitigates the violence of disease, or tends to effect its cure, may be regarded as medicinal. Not only are our more active drugs and poisons medicinal, but sometimes also the most inert substances which could be named. Pure water, by diluting the blood, and by allaying heat, external or internal, may, and indeed often does produce the happiest effects in mitigating disease. So, in some instances, of mild food. Nay, even

the agreeable affections and passions, as love, hope, joy, gratitude, &c., have not unfrequently produced the most salutary effects on the human system, when diseased. They have diminished the violence of arterial or intestinal action, quieted the agitation of the nervous system, and diffused a tranquillity through the whole frame, which, in the circumstances, did more perhaps to restore health than could have been done by the mere force of all the drugs in the world.

The word medicine, however, is generally used to include only those things which are dealt out by the physician and apothecary, and which are supposed to be somewhat active, if not irritating and poisonous. In this sense, or nearly in this sense, will it be used in the following pages.

NATURE OF MEDICINE.—Medicine is here considered as differing from food and drink, in the following respects: When something is taken to appease natural hunger or thirst—something we mean which is proper and wholesome—the stomach appears to receive it in a friendly manner, and to dispose of it quietly, without much agitation of the heart and arteries, or brain and nerves. Even where a substance is received which is not exactly needed, as water when there is no thirst, or plain food beyond what is wanted for the supply of the system, the disturbance is not great or lasting. But when a thing is taken which is wholly medicinal, or which contains medicinal—that is, irritating or poisonous—properties, the effect is very different. Instead of being received as a friend, it is treated throughout as an enemy.

Suppose the substance received to be brandy and water—say half a gill of each, either with or without sugar; for that makes little difference in the results. Now though the water alone, even if there were no

thirst, might occasion but little disturbance, yet the one fourth of a gill of alcohol contained in it, having no natural relation or adaptation to the system, or to any part of it, but being a foe to every part, is treated as such; and there is, as it were, a general rallying of the vital powers and forces to resist and expel it. This we say is the case, when the foregoing quantity is taken by an ordinary healthy adult. If this quantity were taken by an infant of a month old—or if, instead of half a gill, an adult were to take half a gallon of the brandy, life would probably be overpowered at once.

To expel the invading foe—when the system is not overpowered—the following process may be supposed to take place. First, a set of vessels called absorbents is called into action. These take up a part of the brandy, mixed as it is with water, and carry it into the vessels of the circulatory system—the arteries and veins—by means of which it is diffused through all parts of the body. Some of it is cast out of the system through the lungs, in the vapor that constantly issues from them; hence we detect the brandy-drinker by his breath. Another portion goes off through what are called the pores of the skin, with the perspiration. Another portion still is probably filtered out, as it were, through the kidneys.

In passing through the system, however, to make its escape in these various ways, there is much disturbance created. All the parts or organs, tender and irritable as they are, seem to be aware of the presence of the foe, and assist at once in the work of expulsion. They are indeed roused to do this by what is called sympathy, as soon as the mischievous dose is received into the stomach; but they are excited still more when it makes its more immediate appearance among them. The brain is excited, and thought and bodily motion quickened; the heart and arteries are excited, and the pulse is quick-

ened ; the lungs are excited, and we breathe more rapidly ; and the skin is excited, and we perspire more freely. This we mean is the first effect ; the secondary effect is quite the reverse. All these organs having been overworked, in their efforts to expel the alcohol, fall into a debilitated state, soon afterward, as the inevitable consequence.

All the parts, too, or at least the most of them, are left in a somewhat inflamed state. Nor is this the whole of the mischief. The proper balance of action in the system is disturbed ; the vital energies are unnecessarily exhausted, and the *wear and tear* of the parts is greater for the whole time, than it would have been had not the invading foe been admitted. A second attack of the same kind would be resisted with increased difficulty ; more disturbance would be created ; and it would be attended with more lasting consequences. Even if the second attack were by a foe of a very different description, as opium, tobacco, camphor, aloes or calomel, the powers of the system would, by the wear and tear of the first struggle, be less able to resist than before ; or if roused to the same efforts, the consequences would be more exhausting.

If a person were to remain through life in the excited state of the brain, nervous system, &c., above mentioned, as produced by the brandy, that life could not last very long. It would soon be worn out. Or if, as soon as the effects were gone off, and the debility had come on, a new dose were given to lift us up again, and if this rising up and falling were continued, this, too, would in a few years, at most, destroy us.

We have spoken, thus far, of the operation of medicine on those who are healthy, that is, comparatively so. When we are sick, the first effects are sometimes the same ; at others, instead of agitation, quiet is produced,

as when we take a considerably large dose of some narcotic like opium. In the case of disease, a person may be regarded as already in an irritated or poisoned state. The action of the heart, and arteries, and stomach, and liver, and brain, and nerves, indeed of all the functions, is more or less disturbed and deranged, and the new medicine produces a salutary effect, on the principle of substituting one poison and one kind of disturbed action of the system for another.

Do you ask, where then is the gain? When we use the poisonous medicine, we know what it is that affects the system, and understand, in some good degree, how it operates. So that we take the system out of the hands, as it were, of a foe which we have reason to fear will destroy it, by delivering it into the hands of another, which we believe ourselves more able to control. Sometimes, it is true, the new poison operates by producing what might be called a struggle, in which the first enemy is discomfited and slain; and in others still, the latter is driven out without much resistance. Generally, however, as in the first instance, a new diseased action is introduced, to take the place of the old for a time; after which the latter is removed also. To introduce an awkward comparison, for want of a better—By means of medicine, instead of suffering the disease, like an unbridled horse, to run away with the patient, and perhaps destroy him, we contrive to bridle it, and as soon as we may with safety, give it a healthy direction.

Diseases are sometimes—perhaps frequently—removed by the very effort which nature makes to expel an invading foe, in the form of medicine. Thus the reaction, as it may be called, which expels ipecac or emetic tartar from the stomach in the act of vomiting, in some cases expels also, at the same time, the disease. So when we have crippled our stomach with an unreasonable load of

cherries, or other very juicy fruit, it has been customary, time immemorial, to take a dose of brandy; and we have no doubt of its immediate good effects. The stomach is roused to expel the brandy; there is a rush, as it were, of the vital or nervous energy of the system from all parts, for this purpose, and the same efforts which serve to expel the brandy, by quickening the action of the absorbents, serve to expel the cherries—partly by hurrying them through the digestive process, and partly by increasing the action of the bowels themselves.*

It is still quite doubtful whether in most cases it would not be better and safer to leave the stomach to do its work without the aid of the brandy. Whatever quickens the digestive process and the action of the bowels, is believed to lower the action of the system elsewhere.

Medicine, however, whether we are sick or well, exhausts the powers of life. In the case of sickness its use is to be justified, because there is, as we have already intimated, great reason to fear the disease would prove fatal; and it is better to attempt to snatch the individual from death, though it were with some risk of health or life, than to suffer the disease to proceed. True, we repeat it, if active or poisonous medicine does no good, it does harm. It is a sword with two edges. If it cuts not the right way, it cuts the wrong way. If it does not assist in overcoming the disease, it usually falls in with it and makes it worse. Still the risk we run is believed justifiable and proper. But in all cases of tolerable health, or in those cases of milder disease where exercise, food, drink, sleep, &c., can be so regulated as to bring about restoration, medicine should be avoided.

* The explanations of the three preceding paragraphs are the most in vogue. Dr. Jennings, however, has different views. See *Library of Health* for 1838, Vol. II.

MISTAKEN VIEWS.—Many seem to suppose that the occasional use of medicine, even in large doses, as an emetic or a cathartic, cannot do much harm. Nay, some suppose we are the better for it afterward: that health and long life are promoted by it. And as for small doses, taken day after day ever so long, as small doses of *picra*, or bitters, or sulphur, or Dover's powders, or *ipécac*, these cannot possibly do any harm!

Such views as these are mistaken ones; and they are producing a great deal of mischief. The occasional swallowing of emetics and cathartics is hurtful enough; perhaps much more so than anybody has as yet supposed. Those who are enslaved to their use—whether yearly, quarterly or monthly—seldom if ever enjoy anything like perfect health. Such dosing is at best a short and lazy way of doing that which ought to be done more slowly, by means of proper exercise, cleanliness, temperance, &c. People who resort to it may tell us, as many do, how healthy they are, especially soon after the dosing is over; but they are apt soon to be ill again. And when so, there is usually a stronger demand for a second dose than there was for the first. The truth is, that though the system, like a bow which has been long bent, has a tendency to react after the oppression of a strong and powerful dose of medicine is over, there is seldom any permanent good done. There is indeed present relief, but unless the medicine has been used with great skill and care, and is followed up by other health-restoring measures, as proper air and diet, and cheerful exercise, the system is probably injured rather than benefited.

SMALL DOSES.—And yet, how great soever may be the injury done by occasional large doses of medicine, the evil tendency of small doses, habitually taken, is incomparably greater. We doubt whether one person in a

hundred would be likely to paint, in colors too glaring, the evils of the former error ; but we believe that not one in a million has any adequate conception of those of the latter. We believe, most fully, that small doses of medicine—of every kind which irritates or poisons—affect the constitution much more, *in proportion to their quantity*, than large ones. We will give, in as few words as possible, our reasons.

When a large dose of medicine, say a pint of brandy, or twenty grains of calomel, is taken into the stomach, it usually meets with so much resistance, that it is speedily thrown off, either by vomiting or otherwise. The whole vital domain—all the vital organs, we mean—as if aware of its danger, seems to brace itself against it ; and if only a part of it finds its way into the circulation, there is such a terrible commotion produced within that it is very soon ejected from the system, at least the greater part of it. Whereas, when we divide either of these quantities—say the calomel—into twenty doses or portions, and only take two of these small doses a day, it will not usually require the whole of the twenty grains to poison the system very effectually. That troublesome affection called ptyalism, or salivation, will probably manifest itself long before ten days have passed away.

So is it, in regard to the exhibition of most other active medicines. If the object be to make a local or transient rather than a general or permanent impression on the system, single large doses are administered ; but if, on the contrary, our object is to affect, that is poison the system, small doses are administered regularly and daily. In the latter case, they seem to find their way unperceived, into the circulation, and into every nook and corner of the system, bringing it by stealth, as it were, under their influence.

Again ; those persons who use large doses of alcohol,

or powerful emetics, cathartics, &c., only once a month, once in two months, or once in a quarter, and abstain from them entirely the rest of the time, though they unquestionably thereby shorten their lives, will greatly out-last those who take small doses daily, even if the aggregate of those small doses* should not half equal that of the large ones. We might cite particular cases in proof of this point, but the world is full of them. Besides, the principle we are here laying down will come up again presently.

If what we have said thus far is true—if all medicine, even when given by the physician, if not given with the utmost skill and caution, should be regarded as shortening life—if the daily habit of dosing is so pernicious, and especially if the smaller the dose the greater the injury, in proportion to its quantity, how careful ought we to be to take no medicine except when driven to the absolute necessity of doing so, and then only by and with the advice of the most skilful physician. Should there remain any doubt on this point, we think it will be removed by the following considerations.

The daily use of medical substances is usually attended with a production of many serious evils :

1. The taking of one dose makes the way to another more easy. He who has found temporary relief from pain in the use of a dose of laudanum to-day, will be very likely on the recurrence of similar feelings, to take another dose, especially if he has it at hand. The third dose will be taken still more readily ; the fourth more so still ; and so on. Again, what cures repeated turns of colic or any other complaint, will be used, by and by, for relief in other complaints ; and what cures a more severe pain to-day, will of course be expected to cure one less severe to-morrow. Further still ; what cures all sorts of disease so well after it has actually arisen, will be confided in, ere long, to prevent it.

But as one dose taken to prevent pain is likely to awaken troublesome feelings at some future time, nothing is more probable than that he who has once begun the habit of dosing and drugging, will at length become confirmed in it. It is in vain to tell the person who has acquired the habit of dosing, that this is the fact—that every dose of every medicinal substance he takes, from the weakest herb tea to opium or prussic acid, though it relieves present pain, by benumbing the nerves or otherwise, only increases the severity of future attacks. He cannot—he will not—believe you. He is cured, for the present; and that is enough for him.*

2. The daily use of medicine, in small doses, not only aggravates the complaints for which it is taken, but also invites new diseases. It is, in the system, especially in the fluids, almost like leaven in the mass with which we are accustomed to incorporate it. It is, at least, like seed sown on a prepared soil, ready to spring up and bring forth, in new complaints, some thirty, some sixty, and some a hundred fold.

3. The effects of medicines, or the medicines themselves—for we do not understand the process by which the results are accomplished—appear to accumulate in

* An individual of great worth and of much intelligence in other respects, once ventured to reprove us a little, in a gentle manner, for our heresies on the subject of medicine. He said that the experience of mankind in regard to their own complaints, and what would mitigate them, was *not*, as we were wont to say, a false experience. He was in the habit, he said, of curing frequent attacks of nervous head-ache with hoarhound tea; and he knew it to be happily adapted to his case, come of our theories what might. Yes, the hoarhound tea cures his head-ache, we acknowledge; but it will be wanted more and more, and of greater and greater strength, other things remaining the same, as long as he lives. As well might the tobacco or opium taker convince us that his favorite drug is adapted to his peculiar case and constitution. Such experience is usually false, the whole of it.

the system, to break forth in terrible consequences at a future period. This may seem unaccountable to many, but the fact is indisputable, whether it can be accounted for or not. Such, in a particular and striking manner, is the result of infusing the poison of the mad dog into the living system. The bitten animal does not sicken, in some instances, until several years have elapsed. The effects of several articles of the *materia medica*—poisonous as the saliva of the mad dog—are not unlike this. The full effects of calomel, for example, especially when taken in small doses, as in Ching's worm lozenges, and in sundry other nostrums which are frequently advertised, are not always manifested till months and years have elapsed. Thousands and millions of diseases, whose cause was not suspected, have been the legitimate fruits of seed sown long before, in the shape of lozenges, drops, cordials, pills, conserves, &c. Lead—white lead, sugar of lead, &c.—in all their various forms, are well known to accumulate or remain in the system for years, and afterwards, when perhaps least suspected, break out and destroy the individual, or at least leave him miserable for life.

4. But the daily use of medicine of every kind, and in every degree, not only tends to form and fix the habit of dosing, to invite diseases, to aggravate those which are induced by other causes, and to break forth in forms unsuspected, and, to ignorance, unaccountable, at some future period, but it also puts the system in such a condition that we shall hardly be apt to receive benefit from the administration of medicine when we are really sick, and its use seems fairly indicated.

It is said of Mithridates, king of Pontus, that to avoid being poisoned to death, as was the order of the day in his time, he steeled himself against the action of hemlock and other poisons, by gradually accustoming his system

to their influence. Beginning with a very small quantity of hemlock, it is said he increased the dose from day to day, and from year to year, till he could bear the largest quantities of it without any obvious evil consequences. Now what Mithridates did, all persons do, who are in the habit of daily dosing. It is true Mithridates run a risk at every step of his progress, which no wise man ought to run; and no doubt hastened a disease which, when fairly induced, could not be cured. Still there is such a thing as *mithridating* ourselves, if we choose to run the risk of consequences.

We are now prepared to speak of some of the particular forms of abuse with drugs and medicines which exist among us. We shall begin by noticing the errors of

PHYSICIANS.—Happily, the present race of well educated physicians—especially the older and more experienced ones, and those of the younger class who abound greatly in common sense—are administering far less medicine than custom seems to have required at their hands, formerly. Once it was by no means uncommon to find, at the bedside of a sick patient, a list of directions from which a rational man would now revolt. We have seen so many strong, active medicines in application at the same stage of the disease, that it was required, *in order to get round in a reasonable time*, to give one of them every half hour. Now a patient must be made of very singular materials, who could long endure this. We have no doubt that such a practice has slain its myriads every year.

If the question were raised why this course was ever taken by physicians, our reply is, we do not know. Sometimes it was probably supposed that a patient's chance of recovery was in proportion to the amount of strong medicine taken in one way or another. Some-

times there was probably an indefinite idea of giving a variety of powerful articles, in the hope that some one of them would hit, as if we were to fire a dozen rifles toward the spot where an enemy was supposed to be concealed, in the hope that one of them, if not another, would by chance do execution. Sometimes, also, in the expectation of having counselling physicians called, it was desirable to be able to say "yes," in answer to the question, Have you given such or such a thing? If almost everything had been tried, the "blind guide" would not be so likely to expose his ignorance and blindness.

We repeat it, however, we hope the day has gone by, or is fast going by, when such monstrous havoc is thus made with human health and life. Still there are not wanting men, even now, to whom the foregoing remarks are believed to be applicable. Some of these persons are young men, but some of them also are old ones. There are aged fools in every profession, and there are some men young in years, who are yet old in wisdom and experience. As a general fact, however, we think that years, in the practice of medicine, do give wisdom.

Nevertheless, with all these allowances and concessions in favor of the progress of medical science and medical common sense, we are compelled to believe that the great majority of physicians, at the present day, still give too much medicine; and some of them, ten, twelve, fifteen, yea, twenty times too much. All this unnecessary dosing, be it remembered, goes to destroy, on the principles laid down in the preceding paragraphs, much of human health and life.

An intelligent professor in one of our western colleges thinks that each young physician kills, upon the average, about twenty persons, before he gets fairly initiated into his profession. At this rate, and if there is a physician of some sort, regular or irregular—for the irregulars kill,

as well as the regulars, to say the least—to every 500 inhabitants in the United States, and we think there must be, the whole number destroyed by a single generation of physicians, allowing their average life, after commencing their practice, to be 25 years, would be no less than 600,000 persons. How many times 600,000 new diseases are produced by awkward attempts to cure old ones, we are at a loss even to conjecture.

Our strictures on medical ignorance and error and their consequences, may to many seem severe. We are sorry they should seem thus, for we have the highest respect for the medical profession, *as* a profession. Perhaps we shall soon show that if they slay their thousands, other classes of men slay their hundreds of thousands.

We also take great pleasure in disabusing physicians, in several respects. There is a very current belief in the community, even among people of comparative respectability, against which we must enter our unqualified protest. It is the belief that they make people sick, keep them sick, &c., by design, for the sake of the consequent fees. Thousands who really need medical advice, and who might be saved by it from a long season of sickness, refuse to have a physician, because, as they say, if they are not “going to be sick,” he will certainly make them so.

Now this scepticism is greatly to be regretted ; because, in the first place, it is unfounded. That there are unworthy men in the medical ranks—men, even, who would do what has been mentioned—we do not doubt. Are there not scoundrels in every profession ? But such men are rare in the medical profession—so exceedingly rare that the chance of suffering in this way from a physician whom we know, and who has a respectable standing in society, is very small indeed. It may, perhaps, be as one in a million. But this unworthy feeling or belief in re-

gard to physicians is the more to be regretted, because it induces so many people to delay sending for advice till the disease gets such firm hold on the constitution, that powerful dosing and drugging, though it be at the expense of vital force and energy, seems indispensable. Disease will probably expend it: the hope of the physician is that the use of medicine will be as a choice of evils.

It is also often thought, even of respectable physicians, that they order much medicine to give opportunity to another set of men—the apothecaries—to “fleece” us. This, again, is as unworthy an opinion—not to say as low a slander—as the other. We have never known, among hundreds if not thousands of physicians with whom we have been more or less acquainted, but one man whom we suspected of prescribing medicine in order to give opportunity, to himself or to others, *to make out a bill*. The great amount of medicine sometimes ordered and administered, and the unnecessary visits sometimes paid, have usually been the result of sheer ignorance—a want of knowledge or of good sense.

APOTHECARIES.—Regular apothecaries, in this country, though generally men of the best intentions, are not usually educated to their profession. Very few of them, indeed, have any knowledge of pharmacy—the art of preparing, in a proper manner, the medicines they sell—no, nor even of chemistry: whereas it is necessary that they should understand, most profoundly, both chemistry and pharmacy. Nor is this all: they should understand something of what is called *materia medica*. A knowledge of the intimate nature of disease itself is not so indispensable though even this would do them good, as it would probably lead them to be as backward to prescribe, at once, for everybody’s complaints, as they now often are ready and forward to do it.

There can be no doubt that the ease with which a person can, in this country, find his way to a livelihood, by selling drugs and medicines, is one of the greatest evils of our day. It is a most fruitful cause of disease and all its necessary attendants—loss of time, pain and suffering, loss of vital energy, loss of temper, and the bills of physicians, apothecaries and sextons. He who does not see in all these combined, a worse than Pandora's box, has not yet had much opportunity for observation.

We have reason to believe that there are in the United States, at the present time, something like 10,000 of what may be called regular apothecaries' shops, to say nothing of one or two classes of shops to which we shall allude hereafter. Now we do not hesitate to say that this number is at least four times as large as it ought to be. True, nearly every township needs one; but there are few that need more than one; indeed there are few to whom more than one is not a curse rather than a blessing. Had there never been but one such establishment in the city of Boston; had it always been under the care of men—both as principals and assistants—who were trained to the profession, and whose moral character was above suspicion; and had this establishment been duly licensed by proper authority, and effectually forbidden, on heavy penalties, to sell anything, (except in very large quantities to smaller dealers,) unless when prescribed by an accredited and worthy physician; and had it always been so with every apothecary in the United States, how different, at the present moment, would be our condition as a people!

Of course we do not undertake to say that, *as things now are*, it is expedient there should be legislation on the subject. The general feeling that we are a free people, and that we have a right to follow what profession we please, is so strong that we are not sure legislation on

the subject would be borne with. Governments more despotic may, perhaps, enact laws for the good of the people, and enforce them. They may require that no man shall kill his species, except in accordance with law; and may enact laws, so that the number of those who kill shall be exceedingly limited, and their opportunities few, whether the instruments they use are in one form or another. But free governments, it seems, must, in this respect, be more wary!

We repeat it, we have not a doubt of the good intentions of our apothecaries. They are probably as honest as any other class of citizens. The fault of which we complain is more a fault of the community than of individuals. Let the public opinion demand a reformation in this matter, and we shall see these shops conducted in a better manner.

And yet it is painful, exceedingly so, to go into an ordinary apothecary's shop, and spend some little time there, and watch the progress of things. Here comes the prescription of the common sense physician. This you can endure; though even in this matter doubts will be apt to arise whether he is not giving ten times as much medicine—and thus wearing out the patient's constitution ten times as fast—as he ought. But this is not the worst—hardly the beginning. In come the laudanum bottle, the camphor bottle, the elixir bottle, the Huxham's tincture bottle, &c. No physician's prescription for these and a thousand kindred movements which you will witness! Indeed, to cut a long story short, you will conclude that though physicians may order ten times too much medicine, the community order, upon their own responsibility, ten times more than they.

One thing more. Numerous as our apothecaries' shops have become, and difficult as some of their owners find it to get a good—that is a *fashionable*—living, by the pro-

fession, most of them keep, now-a-days, all sorts of patent medicines and nostrums, even though they have at first little faith in them—that is, taken at random, and without medical direction. But having them on hand, and the sale of them lying directly in the line of their interest, many will soon sell them not only without any qualms of conscience, but, it may be, without any conscience at all. Nay more, they soon come to prescribe for every one who comes in. Such a syrup, such a balsam, such an elixir, such and such pills, or such or such cough drops, will, most certainly, they say—and they probably think so—bring about a certain cure.*

We wish this class of citizens could be induced to consider well the great law of love, and to inquire whether it is not their duty, in obedience to the command, Thou shalt not kill, which is a part of that law, not only to do nothing which shall be likely to prove a means of shortening the lives of those around them, but also to *do* everything they can to promote general health and longevity.

OTHER DEALERS.—Sellers of patent medicines, and of what are properly enough called nostrums, or by some, quack medicines—such as the Tomato pills, the Hygeian pills, Brandreth's pills, the Matchless Sanative, &c.—would also do well to study the great law of love. This law is addressed to us, at the present time, and in the same language and force, as if it were direct from Sinai's top; and if it is to be understood as we have supposed in the preceding paragraph—and we believe every one who has studied the subject will admit this—would it not be wise in us to inquire whether we have a right to en-

* The evil is greatly aggravated, when these shops become as much used for confectionary, beer, and even stronger dosing, as they are for what is properly called medicine. Would there were no occasion for hinting at this popular system of doing mischief!

courage, or even to permit, if in our power to prevent it, the indiscriminate circulation of such powerful weapons for good or for evil?

For we do not deny—we cannot—that most of these medicines are medicines of great power and efficiency. The weakest of them usually possesses power enough to redden and inflame the whole lining membrane of the stomach and intestinal canal ;—what then must be the result when the stronger ones are taken? The truth is, as has been found from numerous dissections, that this lining membrane may not only be in a state of sub-inflammation—the state of things of which we have just spoken—without our being sensible of it, but it may also be spread over with eruptions and small ulcers, without causing any perceptible difference in our feelings, except perhaps a little more thirst. The medical man may indeed detect other symptoms of trouble within, in a reddened tongue, hot breath, and more frequent pulse.

Let this be remembered ; and let those who take these powerful nostrums, or who sell them to be taken, learn care. Once in ten times, they *may* be adapted to the cure of the disease for which they are given : nine times in ten, at the least, though they may seem to afford present relief, they only tend to aggravate the disease, and sow the seeds of other diseases, worse than the first.

These remarks are intended to apply to those who, without a proper knowledge of the human constitution, with its laws and relations, or without any thorough knowledge of health and disease, and the nature of medicines and medicinal agents, prescribe or sell them. They also apply to those who take the smallest quantity of any medicine, at least in any ordinary circumstances, except by the direction of a skilful physician. They apply to all quacks and quackery, in whatever form they may appear. They not only apply to licensed and regular,

though lawful drugging, but to that which is irregular and unlicensed. They apply to the sellers of all medicine, whether regular or irregular. They apply—we repeat it—to all buyers as well as sellers. They apply to those who sell wines, spirits, tobacco, snuff, coffee, tea, &c.—for all these are properly medicines—as well as to those who sell calomel and opium. In short, if we should make it appear, by and by, that daily dosing is, in our community, a universal practice, they will apply to the whole community.

MISTAKES OF MOTHERS.—If we have seemed to blame some medical men, and many more apothecaries, and to do more than hint at the errors of other dealers or dabblers in poisonous substances, we shall doubtless be regarded as more severe still on another class of the community, that is, parents. Nevertheless, we mean not blame or censure against any; our feelings are those of sorrow and regret; not of censure.

Some of our medical societies—the medical society of the state of Connecticut, in particular—go so far as to express an opinion that a foundation is often laid for drunkenness in the milk of a nursing mother. If this is so, how ought each mother to avoid, as she would poison, all the forms of drink into which spirits enter, not excepting her favorite milk punch!

But we go much farther. We hold that the child may be affected—nay, is affected, inevitably—by the mother's use of spirits at an earlier period still. Not that drunkenness is always the result, even of the free use of spirits through the whole of that critical period of woman's history to which we allude; but the result is, in one way or another, always mischievous. An unnatural excitability of the child's nervous system; a predominance of the nervous or sanguine temperament, a degree of mental or

physical precocity, or both ; an unnatural stupidity, or preternatural wakefulness ; a tendency to cutaneous diseases, brain fever, bowel complaints or worms—any or all of these, and many more evils which could be enumerated, are without doubt the frequent consequences of dosing, by the mother, at this period, as well as during nursing. Nor is it indispensable to this end, that the dosing be with spirits. Anything which is medicinal, especially which is narcotic or poisonous, may have the same tendency, as tobacco, snuff, opium, laudanum, camphor, valerian, assa-fœtida, coffee, tea, cider, wine, ale, beer, &c. Nay, farther still than all this. Anything which affects the health of the mother—which impairs the tone of her stomach, or diminishes the energy of her nervous system—may, through this medium, have similar effects on her offspring to those which we have mentioned above ; and may and will prepare the child to yield, in his turn, to the same temptations to gratify a fondness for excitement, which have been too powerful for those who preceded him.

Let this pass, however. Let it be supposed that a child begins its existence free from any contamination or tendency to contamination—free from the influences of dosing and drugging, or any inclination thereto. How long will it be, even then, before he will be injured ?

The meconium must be removed, the mother thinks, and so do those around her ; and what will do it more effectually, at least more quickly and certainly, than castor oil, or a little tea of senna and aromatic seeds, or senna and manna ? But the natural consequence of this *forcing* is, the supposed necessity, within a few days afterwards, of more medicine ; and as a general rule, the more we depend on medicine, in these cases, the more we may. Nor is the evil at all diminished by the mother's dosing herself, in purpose and manner not dissimilar.

Nor is this all: would that it were. The child's stomach, diseased and debilitated, and loaded to excess with food which, in itself, is often far from being healthy, is unable to act with facility upon its contents, and distention, and flatulence, and nausea ensue; sometimes pain. To add to the distress, catnip tea, or fennel seed tea, or some such substance, is administered. This increases the trouble, till nature, to relieve herself, institutes the process of vomiting. Now the poor creature feels relieved, and we rejoice at our skill, in what ought to be our shame. The child has been tortured, by our interference, at every step. He wanted no medicine—in one case in thirty—from the very first; neither did his mother. Judicious, rational treatment, in regard to food, drink, and the rest of the *non-naturals*, as they are called by physicians, would have been far better than any use of medicine, even catnip, fennel, oil or sweetened water.

Nor does it end here. The same propensity to dabble with medicine continues. Now Godfrey's cordial is supposed necessary; now Warren's elixir, or elixir pro.; now elixir paregoric, or laudanum. Some mothers hold that all children need paregoric. We have known mothers of large families who gave it regularly to all their children; yet we have never known any such children who did not finally suffer. If they do not seem injured by it while nature is pushing on, as in infancy, childhood and youth, their manhood is apt to be short and uncertain, and their old age premature and full of decrepitude.

We might give a list—and a long one, too—of the kinds of medicine which are so freely used by mothers. Once the number of articles was very few—perhaps not half a dozen. Now, half the community, even of our plainest people, keep a small apothecary's shop. We have seen many a closet for food, which contained a bet-

ter assortment of medicine, especially of the more active kinds, than used to be contained in some of our regular country shops. Among these, in addition to those mentioned above, may be found castor oil, senna, two or three kinds of salts, snakeroot, Indian pink, calomel, picra, rhubarb, ipecac, antimonial wine, Huxham's tincture, Dover's powders, spirits of lavender, saffron, camphor, peppermint, sulphur, hartshorn, wormwood, horehound, catnip, sage, mallows, balm, &c., to say nothing of Stoughton's bitters, Lee's pills, Hygeian pills, and half a dozen or a dozen other powerful nostrums, and opium, and various kinds of spirits.

With such an apothecary's shop at command, and with that confidence which our dosing mothers usually have in their great skill in wielding its contents, is there a possibility of the child's escape from the evils of everyday dosing? Or if some escape partially, are there any who escape wholly? And is it to be wondered at, that mothers and nurses stare, when we tell them, as we are accustomed to do, that nearly every mother and child is injured, more or less, by the smallest amount of the mildest medicine—even sage or catnip; and that not one in a hundred is benefited?

We have seen a child, only four or five months old, in convulsions from an extra dose of that which it had taken from the first—laudanum and spirits of lavender; and have seen it require days and weeks of patient care, to keep it in a state from which crippled nature could restore it to its mother. It is no trifling tax upon the nervous energies of a child of five months, to dispose of laudanum and lavender, at the rate of thirty drops of each, twice or three times a day. If a child does not perish under such treatment, he is at least a sufferer—and must be so—for life.

It does seem to us exceedingly unsafe to keep such a stock of medicines in the house. The temptation is too

great, to those who know what happy *immediate* effects it will sometimes produce. It were a far safer extreme, to follow our own example, and dare to keep none at all. A very few articles, at most, are all that should be tolerated, and these should be regarded as rank poisons, to be used only in extremities. We knew a physician who carried ergot—a powerful poison—among his pocket medicines, for several years, resolving never to use it, except in the last extremity; and who finally never did use it, but succeeded without it. Let medicine, if kept in families at all, be kept with nearly the same feelings.

We know a lady—we presume there are many such—who keeps a medicine chest in good earnest; and her stock of medicine—the variety, at least—is respectable. She spent some time, in her earlier years, in the family of a physician—long enough to acquire full confidence in her own medical skill, and yet not long enough to acquire any just knowledge on which to ground it.

This lady is often found dosing her children, and even her husband. The good man, though sensible in all other respects, is in this matter a complete dupe. We have heard him say his wife saved him many a ten dollar bill every year, which would otherwise be paid to physicians. Do you ask how? By dosing his children whenever they are unwell; not with simple herbs, which, though folly, were *less* foolish, but with active medicine. She boasts of the health of her children, and yet is ever and anon dosing them; and is, in her own estimation, always successful!

Should the question arise in the mind of any reader, why medicine is needed in her family at all, we have at hand the reply. It is to remove the effects of other medicines. Perhaps her children were originally healthy. But the moment any little complaint arose, they were at once dosed; and nature—ever true to her post,

till she is worn out by abuses—rousing herself as soon as the oppression of the medicine was over, established a reaction. But the healthy action of the stomach or liver, or both, was permanently disturbed, and ere long—perhaps at first it was not till many months had elapsed—some new complaint sprung up. In “curing” this, the seeds of another or perhaps of several were sown. Every reaction of the system, after a season of dosing and drugging was over, was construed by the mistaken mother into a proof of her own skill, and of course established her confidence in herself. Thus she is still going on, and it needs not a prophetic eye to see that she is slowly destroying the health and mental vigor of her children, if not of her husband. Thus she goes on, we say; and thus she will go on while she lives. And what she is, in a remarkable degree, most mothers and some fathers are in a degree greater or less. Few children long escape.

DOSING IN GENERAL.—But it is not physicians, apothecaries, grocers, and parents alone who have fallen into the pernicious habit in question. It is, as a general fact, all mankind. There is an universal tendency to dosing and drugging, throughout the civilized world.

The skilful physician—he who is truly so—though he uses medicine, can hardly be said to use it as a curative, but rather to remove obstructions, or stay the progress of diseased action. For cure, he looks to the strength of constitution which remains; to the power of nature to rally; and to diet, drink, sleep, exercise, air, cheerfulness, hope, &c.

But the reverse is the case with ignorance—the ignorance of the multitude. The ignorant person looks chiefly or wholly to medicine to effect a cure, as if by miracle or magic; and little, if at all, to anything else. And in proportion to his ignorance will be his confidence

in medicine, and his utter want of confidence in the restorative powers of nature. This explains why it is that the most skilful physician has the least confidence in medicine, and the deepest conviction of its uncertainty, while the most ignorant person is the most confident in its power and certainty. If a person is ill, and especially if he can get a name to a disease, he knows of a hundred certain cures, while the wise physician perhaps doubts in regard to all. Disease is not an animal, with just so many hoofs and horns. The circumstances of all diseases, from cold to cholera, are forever various and varying; and no two persons are ever sick precisely alike. Hence the judicious man hesitates, and thinks twice before he acts once; whereas the ignorant and unthinking are ready to act without any thought at all. They suppose disease to be fixed in its character. If it is said to be rheumatism, for example, why, what cured rheumatism in somebody else, or was supposed to do it, will certainly cure it again, in their estimation.

This is, in our view, not only the very soil in which quackery flourishes, but, the very essence of quackery itself. On this principle can we fully account for the tendency, everywhere and in everybody so rife, both *to dose* and *to be dosed*. On the same principle may we account for the faith of mankind in native Indians of both sexes, in seventh sons of seventh sons, in herbs "good for sickness," in spring medicines, in patent medicines, in preventives of disease in sick rooms, in natural bone setters, and in some countries, in charms and conjurors. It is on this principle that they will trust their lives, and perchance those of their families, in the hands of men with whom they would not dare to trust their property, to the amount of twenty-five cents.

In short, there is an almost universal skepticism prevailing among the mass of mankind in regard to the sci-

ence of health and life, and even in regard to the scientific practice of medicine, while there is an almost equally universal faith in ignorance and mystery and empiricism. So universal is the custom of dosing, in one form or another, and at one age or another—often at all ages—that we say of physical error, as the Bible says of moral transgression, that there is not a just man on earth, that liveth and sinneth not. Hence, in fact, that is, from our dosing, come those diseases with which everybody is more or less afflicted. Hence the fact that the world—the civilized world, at least—appears to us like one vast hospital, only that the patients have fine, healthy wards, and some of them are not too lazy to walk about in them. Hence it is that people, from the cradle to the grave, may be said to be in the habit (even though they do it ignorantly, as most of them undoubtedly do) of cutting slowly their own throats and those of their fellows. Hence, too, in part, the fact that there is no natural healthy birth or life, nor any but unnatural and violent deaths. No one dies the death of the “physically righteous;” no one lives out the full measure of his days; and no one departs wholly in peace.

If these are hard sayings—and we have no doubt they will be so to many—still are they not true? If all medicine may justly be said to shorten life, except when exhibited with scientific skill to combat serious disease, is it not obvious to common sense and right reason, that our conclusions are well founded? Lest there should remain a lingering doubt on the minds of some, we have one thing more to say.

DOSING AT OUR MEALS.—Dr. Cullen, and we believe most scientific writers on medicine, set down tea and coffee, and every species of fermented liquor, from small beer, mead, metheglin, cider, ale, and perry, to the strongest

wines, together with pearlash, red and black pepper, mustard, ginger, allspice, cloves, cinnamon, mace, nutmeg, orange and lemon peel, horse-radish, soda-water, vinegar, and many more of our aromatics and condiments, some of which are in daily use with us, from our earliest infancy, as medicinal substances. Some of these, according to Cullen, Hooper, or others—as coffee, tea, pearlash, vinegar and fermented liquors—are actually poisonous to the living system; that is, they contain in a greater or less degree, poisonous properties. Others are stimulants; and if not actually poisonous, are nevertheless foes to the vital powers; tending to induce disease and shorten life.

Now if it were possible that any individual has hitherto escaped the charge of daily dosing, from his very cradle, is he not implicated here? Where is the man, or the woman, or the child, to be found in civilized society, whose solids and fluids have not been daily under the influence of some one of the substances here enumerated, or which might be included in the same general class? But if such an individual cannot be found, then no person can be found who is not in the habit of daily dosing. But daily dosing and drugging, as we have seen already, is a source, inevitably and unavoidably, of disease and suffering; and renders the world, designed to be an abode of health and happiness, a scene of much misery—a vale of sorrow and tears.

Does any one ask for evidence that our common table drinks and condiments, as coffee, tea, cider, vinegar, pepper, mustard, pearlash, &c. have the effects of which we have been speaking? Does any one say, If to use these is daily dosing, then how is it that so many thousands and millions, who daily use them, are perfectly healthy?

We reply that the thousands and millions who use them are *not* perfectly healthy. Examine the lining membrane of the stomach and intestinal canal of these individuals, who use medicine daily, whether in the form of stimulat-

ing and narcotic drinks, or in that of heating condiments. Examine the inside of him who habitually uses much salt; for this too, is a medicinal substance. And what, think you, will be the results? What indeed, but that the more freely these or any of them are used, as a daily habit, the more reddened or inflamed is the membrane of which we have been speaking, and the more irregular the action of the liver and other adjoining organs?

A person in this state—and what adult is not in it, more or less?—a person, we say, in this state, is never in health—he cannot be. He may talk of health—and we would have him do so rather than to be talking of sickness, unless it would induce him to change his habits—but let him suppose himself as healthy as he may, there is mischief within. Have we not told you that lead and many other medicinal substances do not always show forth their terrible effects at once? As it was in the days of Solomon, so it is now; that sentence against an evil work is not always executed speedily. All these persons who are in the daily use of condiments, have disease before they reach the grave, unless they are destroyed by accident; whence then comes it? Does disease spring out of the ground? Or is it caused by our dietetic and other errors; and especially by our daily dosing and drugging?

The question now comes to the physical reformer—and to the moral reformer also, for physical degeneracy is one of the greatest present obstacles to true moral and religious reform—What shall be done? How shall a stop be put to the dosing and drugging system?

MEANS OF REFORM.—The community having, by their daily dosing, so prepared their systems that, like a magazine that is ready to be blown up the moment a spark is communicated to the train of combustible material which is prepared for the purpose, disease is ready to burst out

in full violence the moment any strong exciting cause operates upon them, there is, we think, no safer way than to commit themselves, on the accession of disease, to the best physician they can find.

What! take his poisons? some will say. Yes, take his poisons, if he chooses to give poisons. Your continual drugging, all your life long, has already poisoned you; and your disease is, for the most part, the boiling over of that poison. You have dosed yourself or have been dosed by others, either occasionally or daily, into disease. If you have not done this with calomel, or emetic tartar, or opium, or tobacco, or spirits, or fermented or narcotic drinks of any sort—nor even with coffee or tea—yet you have done so with vinegar, mustard, pepper, pearlash, spices, salt, &c. For even salt, in excess—and it is generally used thus—operates medicinally, as every one may know who has attended, in the least, to its effects.* With some of these, then, we say, you have dosed or been dosed, almost from the first day you saw the light to the present hour; and you must be a sort of standing miracle, if your whole mass of solids and fluids is not contaminated—nay, poisoned thereby.

When, therefore, you are so nearly destroyed by disease that you can go no farther, or rather when the diseased action which has existed within you almost ever since you were born has taken a new turn, and you are ignorant what to do, it is desirable you should ask counsel. In such cases, it is the part of true wisdom to call a physician; one in whom you can place the most entire confidence.

This confidence cannot, it is presumed, be placed in one who knows nothing of the human constitution, one

* Who does not know the tendency of highly salted food to aggravate or even to produce diseases of the skin, &c.?

who has neither been trained to his employment, nor made it a subject of daily and yearly study. You would not employ a pilot to conduct your vessel safely into port, who, you did not believe, understood his business and the situation of the coast and harbor.

But employ whom you may—for it is not our business to dictate in this matter—we repeat it, follow his directions implicitly. No sensible master of a vessel, when he has secured the services of a pilot, attempts at all to interfere. Indeed it would not answer to do so. The pilot would not suffer it; and the customs or laws of the community would bear him out in his refusal. This is the dictate of common sense, too, as well as law. Why then should we not follow, just as implicitly and unconditionally, him who undertakes to pilot us in disease? Is death less dreadful than shipwreck?

Talk not—we repeat it once more—of the physician's poisons. You have but a choice of evils at best—a choice of poisons. It is but to choose whether you will submit to the effects of past poisoning, and which seem just now to be running you down with increased velocity, or to the efforts of a skilful individual, who has spent his life in the study and practice of the art of managing poisoned and shattered human frames.

We have already spoken of the unworthy notions everywhere current, in regard to the moral integrity of physicians. The truth is, mankind have both too much and too little confidence in the medical art. They have too much confidence in it as a matter of mystery and charm and conjuration, and too little confidence in it as a matter of profound study and truly scientific investigation.

To aid the skilful physician in obviating the terrible evils with which we seem threatened, by a storm which has been gathering from our errors all our life-long, good

nurses or attendants are needed. It is indeed of little consequence to call for medical aid, if we have no confidence in it; but such services are of still less importance, if in addition to all this, our attendants are without confidence, or are disposed to use their own judgment. We have before spoken on this subject, but we must again insist on it; there can be no safety but in submitting wholly to the pilot. How many persons soever there may be on board ship, or at hand, there must be but one head—one master—and all the rest, however wise or skilful, must be either hands or passengers.

It is painful, exceedingly so, to a medical man who is trying to do his duty, amid ten thousand difficulties, to find those difficulties increased by a want of co-operation, on the part of those who are expected to execute his commands during his absence. If, horror-struck at the sight of a little cream of tartar, or magnesia, and fancying it to be calomel, the attendant throws it into the fire; or even if it be what he supposes it to be, and he burns it or throws it out the window, how is anything but death to be expected? Many a nurse and attendant—not to say many a son and daughter, and brother and sister, and wife and husband—have in this way as effectually destroyed that life which was often dearer to them than their own, as if they had given a dose of arsenic, or applied the axe, the razor or the halter. No matter whether the medicine is or is not poisonous; no matter, we mean, so far as we are concerned, as attendants. It is our business to execute, to the fullest extent of our power, the plans of the medical pilot, or else at once dismiss him, and take the responsibility upon our own shoulders.

But to get well when we are sick, and to get well in the best possible manner, go but a small way towards removing from our land the evils of drugging. These

are indeed important items, and in our view must be faithfully and thoroughly *done*; but there is a still greater work which must not be left undone.

This is, to seek out the causes, remote and near, of our illness; and if our drugging has had anything to do with it, seek to know the course by which its further evil consequences may be averted. In doing this, too, no man is better qualified to aid us than the well educated, common sense physician. Why then do not mankind avail themselves oftener of his services?

First, because they are not trained to think—especially to study the relation of cause and effect. Secondly, because they are not trained to realize that diseases are the effects of any causes which can or could be found out. They may suppose them to be the result of chance; they may suppose them to be inflicted by the immediate agency of a benevolent or a malevolent spirit. In most cases, however, they have not thought at all on the subject. Thirdly, because they do not care much about the future. It is sufficient for their purpose, if they have got out of danger, and can go on again. What do they want of the doctor till they are sick again? Fourthly, they have no confidence in him as an adviser in regard to health. Here every one, as a general fact, trusts to his own experience.

Some, who have become partially awake to the importance of the subject, ask us why the physician does not volunteer his advice on these occasions. If, say they, he sees that an individual, by the daily use of cider, by almost constantly inhaling bad air, either in his sleeping room, in his parlor, or in his shop, or by an excessive use of condiments or unhealthy food, is exposing himself to the influence of every coming epidemic, why does he not tell him so, and persuade him to cease the work of self-

destruction ; and if he can do no more, at least preserve the things which remain, but are ready to perish ?

But what good purpose would it answer, if a physician were to do this ? It is of little service to attempt to instruct mankind, when they feel no desire for instruction. Few people will hearken to such instruction at all ; and of the few who would hear it, very few would attach importance enough to it to make them remember it. They that are whole need not a physician, they will perhaps say ; quoting the language of Holy Writ. So long as this feeling exists, what good will it do to attempt to instruct them ? We might almost as well—using Scripture language once more—cast our pearls before swine.

Is it said that physicians ought to remove the darkness and ignorance of the world on this subject ? So, at first, it would seem. And yet, for even this they are not ready, in any considerable numbers. The mass of mankind, on this subject at least, evidently *love* darkness rather than light. Physicians cannot get their ears, if they would.

There is another difficulty, we acknowledge. Physicians, as a general rule, are not well prepared to instruct mankind in the laws of health and life, were the latter disposed to listen. What knowledge they have of anatomy, physiology and hygiene, is for the most part superficial. It was mostly acquired by rote, as modern school boys acquire their wonderful knowledge of grammar, geography, history, &c., without understanding it. Nor will they be likely to acquire it more thoroughly, till there is a demand for it in their daily practice. When the public come to see its usefulness and necessity, and to look to their physicians, as well as elsewhere, for light and assistance, and when they are ready to pay them for these as liberally as for other services, then, and

not till then, will physicians be prepared to furnish the necessary instruction. Let a commodity be demanded in the market, and there is little doubt that the market will soon be found to furnish it.

Recovery from a fit of sickness is a season peculiarly favorable to reformation in our habits, especially in regard to dosing and drugging. For this reason, were there no other, it is peculiarly desirable that something should be done by the physician, at this time, in the way of affording assistance. At this precious season, our appetite is usually keen, our reason comparatively unclouded, our moral perceptions vivid, and all things comparatively bright and happy. In no other circumstances, perhaps, shall we experience so little opposition from depraved feelings, habits, associations and tastes, in our attempts to return to nature's simplicity.

So difficult, however, is reformation—especially a reformation of physical habits—even to those who are but little beyond life's threshold ; so hard is it to eradicate our taste for medicinal substances, and our daily if not hourly reliance on some one or more of them, except perhaps when aroused to reflection by suffering, or during the leisure of convalescence, that there is great reason to fear but little will ever be done in this way. Multitudes there indeed are who, if convinced of its necessity, would not attempt anything, the task seems so formidable.

We cannot indeed approve of such neglect to do what we know ought to be done, though fully aware that it is perfectly natural to us. There is no person who may not and ought not, in view of its necessity, to break at once from his slavery to drugs and medicines. Not perhaps from all at one time, but one by one till the "coast is cleared." First the opium, perhaps ; next the tobacco ; next the occasional emetics or cathartics ; next the spirituous liquors ; then, one by one, the fermented

drinks, the warm narcotic slops, the pepper, the mustard, the vinegar, &c.

If it is asked whether each of these, in its turn, should be entirely abandoned at once, our reply is, that we suppose it rather more easy, and perhaps a little more safe, to leave off any of these things by degrees, that is, by lessening the dose gradually from day to day, till it is reduced to nothing. But as there are few in the world who have the moral courage to break off in this way, and hardly any who would probably succeed in such an attempt, we deem it best to break from each separate drug or medicine at once. In this way we are sure of ourselves; in other circumstances, our emancipation is more than doubtful.

Nor is the danger to the constitution, in breaking suddenly from the use of substances which do not *make blood*, very considerable, after all. We have known the slaves of spirits and tobacco break off suddenly, at a very advanced age, with no perceptible injury to their constitutions. And what has been done, can be done again.

We insist on the one or the other. Dosing and drugging must be stopped; if not for our own sakes, at least for the sakes of those around us, and those who are to come after us. Mankind will deteriorate till this is done, other things remaining the same; and the least which, as rational beings and as christians, we can do, is to see that the evil extends no farther. If we will not break from the use, say of cider or coffee, suddenly—which, by the way, is the easiest course, after all—let us at least try what can be done gradually. Let us every day use a little less of our medicinal beverage, even if it be but one teaspoon full less.

We repeat the sentiment, then, there is great reason to fear that but little will ever be done for mankind, either in the way of mere correction, or by directing our efforts

to the generations already on the stage of action. So thoroughly imbued has society become with the drugging system, that if our hopes of its renovation were restricted to the little which can be done for those whose habits are already formed, we confess we should be almost ready to consider our case, in this respect, desperate.

But when we consider what may be done for the generations yet to rise, our courage revives, and we still indulge strong hopes of our race.

Let those who are convinced of the importance of diffusing, through our whole community, such a knowledge of the human organs, functions and relations, as shall enable them to do something for the children whom God may place in their hands to be educated—let all such persons, we say, according to their means, enter with their whole souls, into this field of labor. Let them at least form associations for the purpose of acquiring and diffusing knowledge of this kind; such, for example, as those which have, within a few years past, been formed in Boston, New York, Providence, and elsewhere. Let mothers, especially, engage in this work. Let them seek to train up their families in the way they should go, and without a reliance on medicine. If they will not cease to drug themselves, let them at least cease to drug their children.

When a few more associations of this kind shall have been formed, and a knowledge of their existence and object begins to spread abroad, the most beneficial results will inevitably follow. Anatomy and hygiene will be introduced not only to the attention of families, but to that of schools. Indeed, this very result has already begun to appear. The University of New York has recently appointed a professor of Hygiene, in the medical school connected with it; and many an academy, high school, and select school, has begun to recognize, in the

arrangement of its course of instruction, the importance of studying ourselves.

How strange it is that this knowledge of ourselves should have been so long overlooked! How strange that everything else should be investigated—the earth, the air, the heavens—while we are strangers to our own homes, the very “houses we live in!” How strange that all the objects around us, far and near, in land and in water, mineral, vegetable and animal, should be studied at our schools, and yet ourselves, our very selves, the importance of a knowledge of which has been admitted time immemorial, remain unstudied and wholly neglected!

Let this great subject, the correct education of man—his physical, as well as his intellectual and moral part—once take strong hold on the public feeling, and let parents—especially mothers—and teachers, become thoroughly awake to their duty, and the emancipation of the world from the daily use of drugs and medicines may be considered as half accomplished.

When mothers understand what their duty is—christian mothers, we mean, for let us here say we have little hope of much permanent progress in any work of reform, except in so far as it is carried forward by the disciples of Christ—when conscientious mothers once get hold of this matter as it is desirable they should, then will the wheels of improvement go forward.

A child will no sooner begin its existence, than the effort will begin, to make it what it should be. If the fountains whence it draws its first nutriment cannot be preserved wholly uncontaminated, they will at least be comparatively so.

The nursing mother will not construe that law of nature which gives her an unusually keen appetite, into a license to devour twice or three times as great a *quantity* of food as usual. She will know, perhaps, that it is the

opinion of the wisest medical men, that she needs very little more nourishment than at other times. She will consider her keen appetite as a substitute for spices and condiments; and in mercy to her child, if she has no mercy on herself, she will use her food and drink as much as possible without the intermixture of medicinal substances, and without any other liquids than Nature's own beverage, pure water.

She will not only avoid mixing drugs with her food or drink, as much as she can, but she will endeavor so to regulate her own habits and the treatment of her child, that no castor oil, Godfrey's cordial, catnip or peppermint tea, elixir paregoric, or any other article from the shop of the apothecary, will be necessary for either. This is a result easily enough accomplished by any healthy intelligent mother of a healthy child.

The change in the child's condition, from a mode of existence in which its solids and fluids are built up from substances not only more highly animalized, but also more impregnated, if we may so say, with medicated substances—as is more generally the fact—to one in which, if the indications of Nature are followed as above, the food is milder, cooler, less animalized, and more free from foreign poisons, will not, moreover, be misconstrued into a license to the abuse of giving other food before it is needed, or even before it can be disposed of without acting as a foreign body in the stomach, and producing all the irritation which such a body produces.

The first food which is given, in addition to the milk of the mother, will be mild and bland, like it. It will be cows' milk and water, in equal proportions, at first, and a little sweetened with loaf sugar, so as to make it, in properties and taste, as much like its other food as possible. After a few days, the proportion of cows' milk will be somewhat increased, and the sugar diminished.

From this the child will pass gradually, after some months, to other food; but instead of using seasonings, which are of course neither more nor less than medicinal substances, such food should be perfectly simple, and without the intermixture of any foreign substance whatever. Strange indeed would it be, if after having been gradually and for a long time trained to the use of food less and less heating, and affected less and less by condiments—and this is in accordance with the opinion of the best writers on this subject—it should suddenly need that proportion of salt, pepper, spice, pearlash, &c. which is usually allowed it! And it were not only strange that it should be so, but wholly unnatural.

The only exception to the strictest interpretation of the foregoing remarks is in favor of salt. In regard to the use of this substance, if we take the ground that it is useful to us because it is so to some of our domestic animals—and this is the only argument which is valid in its support—and if we practice according to this belief, the child may require this form of medicine a few times in a month, or at most once or twice a week. This is the only dosing or drugging which is at all admissible at any age, but especially in infancy and childhood—we mean so long as the individual is healthy.

But what is to be done if the child is not healthy? we probably shall be asked. Is not medicine needed then? Especially what is to be done if the child is taken sick very suddenly, or the physician is at a distance, or engaged? Is the mother to administer?

We will answer these questions, premising, however, that if the foregoing directions in regard to the general treatment of the mother and child were followed out strictly, little if any disease would ever arise; and consequently very little medicine would be demanded. Indeed, we do not believe that if all the laws of health

were strictly obeyed by both parents from the time of entering into the matrimonial state, any inherited predisposition to disease would be apt to rise so far as to require medical treatment from the parents or anybody else.

We do not know that it may not be necessary for those individuals who live remote from any physician, to keep, in their houses, a very few medicines, as a little laudanum or paregoric, and a little ipecac or some more active emetic. But the temptation is so great, to give medicine where it might be dispensed with, that we should by all means keep as few kinds as possible. And if it must be kept, as a last resort where we cannot do better, why it may, of course, as a last resort, (but only as such) be used; and that, too, by the mother.

We shall be permitted, in this place, to give a single example of the benefits we have actually seen from abandoning the dosing and drugging system. It is only one case among the many we have known, but it is a striking one.

Mr. W. H. was, twelve years ago, an apothecary. Though bred to active exercise in the open air, he had been *in the shop* from sixteen to twenty-five, and had contracted the habit, as most persons in apothecaries' shops do, of frequently dosing; and what is equally common, the more he relied on medicine, the more frequent was its apparent necessity. He was pale, inefficient, without appetite, costive, and in one word, sickly.

His wife, for he had been married a few years, was in a worse condition than himself. Though naturally healthy enough till fourteen, she had from that time, or about that time, been immured in school rooms and shops, and been under the influence, almost perpetually, either of a dosing mother or a physician. She was seldom wholly confined to her bed, but she was always feeble, exceedingly so. Most people thought her whimsical; she seemed,

as they said, so fleshy and healthy. Nevertheless, she was a sick woman. She had no appetite, and no regular habits. She was pale and feeble, and suffered much from languor and pain. Her closet, moreover, had become so filled with phials, and gallipots, and papers, and powders, that it was almost difficult to tell which kept the best assortment, her husband or she; and she was daily and almost hourly dosing.

About this time, they received a young physician into their family as a boarder, where he remained a year or two. During this time, he succeeded in partially breaking up the habit of daily dosing, in both the husband and the wife; and the good effect on their health, as the consequence, was considerable. Still, the effects of many years of dosing and drugging remained behind. All their children, one after another, were either stillborn or died early.

Time and circumstances at length separated the young physician from this family for many years. A few months since, having occasion to pass through the neighborhood, and to stop for dinner at a public house, only a few rods from the door of his old friends, the apothecary and his family, he called to see them. He was surprised to meet, instead of the pale, pimpled apothecary, a man of firm step, healthy countenance, and strong muscles. You seem greatly improved in health, he exclaimed. I should hardly have known you. "Oh yes," said he, with emotion, "I just begin to know what it is to enjoy life. I can *eat* now, and I can *work*."

The change in Mrs. H. was equally surprising. She came forward from her wash tub, and though thin, much more so than formerly, she was evidently healthy and vigorous. Her countenance, like that of the husband, was indeed a little *browned*, but it was firm, and so was her voice.

Presently up ran two or three little children. Whose are these? exclaimed the physician. "They are ours," was the reply. Are they healthy? "Quite so," said the parents. But what is the cause of all this change, said the physician.

Their story is soon told. They had long ago abandoned the apothecary's shop, and the practice of daily dosing. And, more recently, they had failed in business, and become quite impoverished. The husband had been driven to hard labor in the open air, and the wife to house-work. And this, under God, was the means of their restoration to the path of nature, and to the hopes of a rising family.

Such a story needs no comment from us. Our readers will see in it, a specimen of what is taking place, and of what might be taking place, on a greater or smaller scale, every day, and everywhere around us.

We have spoken hitherto of physicians, as if their aid and advice might for the most part be dispensed with; as if they were a sort of necessary evil, to act for us in those cases where a choice of evils only remain to us. That is, they are needed occasionally, as pilots are at sea or at the entrance of difficult harbors, &c.

This is, indeed, one use—and it is at present the principal use which is made of them. But if the time should ever come—and come it may, if the cause of "temperance in all things" should get fairly under way—when they are not much wanted for corrective effort, how are they to be employed? And how are they to gain a livelihood?

For ourselves, we should have no sort of objection to seeing this whole profession thrown out of employ, if the community could thereby be restored to sound health. We should have no fears that in a country of abundance, like our own, they could not gain, in some way or other,

and in a useful way, too, an honest livelihood. But there is no danger of their services not being needed, and in considerable numbers too—for much time to come.

Admitting, however, that the temperance cause were to make such progress among us, that physicians, after the lapse of another hundred years, would have very little to do in the way of correcting disease; they might still, as a profession, be exceedingly valuable. Indeed, were the demand once made for their services, in the way of prevention, and were they to render themselves fit for it by a more thorough course of study in anatomy, physiology and hygiene, we believe that the efforts of the whole medical corps, in this and every other country, might be usefully secured and fully employed.

But it will be objected, here, that if men were so temperate in every respect, or should ultimately become so, that nothing like acute or severe disease should exist, what will then be done with them?

We will answer this question by asking another. Is there, then, nothing for us to do in reference to health, but barely to escape acute and severe disease? Are there no complaints short of this, with which fallen humanity is afflicted? On the contrary, is not the world full of them? Are we not beset, everywhere, with hypochondria, indigestion, melancholy, and an endless train of nervous complaints—to say nothing of colds, and tooth-ache, and head-ache, and bowel complaints? And would it not be desirable to know how to escape these?

In short, were we to be exempt even from all the train of ills to which the foregoing is a mere preface, there is still room for great progress in health and vigor. Probably there is not a person on earth—man, woman or child, of any age whatever—whose health is so good as not to be susceptible of improvement by means of improved habits, at every hour and moment of life.

Are we not, moreover, bound, as christians, to make the most of ourselves, in all circumstances and conditions? But is this obligation fulfilled, unless our bodily health is elevated, at all periods of our lives, to the highest pitch of which our nature and means are susceptible? Do we serve God with all our strength—with all our bodily, nay, with all our mental and moral faculties—unless our bodily organs are improved to the highest healthy condition, and all their functions and relations duly cultivated and brought to bear in the highest possible degree on health and longevity?

In short, the use we would make of medical men beyond that of employing them to assist in the work of correcting disease, would be something like the following—our object being to prevent all dosing and drugging, and all necessity for it.

Let every intelligent father and mother secure, at the earliest possible period at which it can be brought to bear on the condition of the infant, the best medical advice and instruction. Let them take hold of the subject, not merely as if it were a whim of the moment, but from a thorough conviction of its importance, as a matter of duty to themselves, to the child, to society and to God. There are medical men whose services, in this way, would be invaluable; and the number of such physicians would rapidly increase, were there anything like an universal demand for them.

Let them consider the force of constitution and natural temperament of the child. Let them look at him with the aid of physiology, phrenology, hygiene, and every other science which is adapted to shed light in the pathway of human life. Let them consider what are his hereditary tendencies to disease. Is he inclined to this disease or to that? to consumption, scrofula, mania, rheumatism, &c.? Let the condition—the knowledge, employ-

ments, circumstances, &c., of the parents, so far as known by the physician, and so far as they are likely to affect the child's physical management, in any respect, be considered.

In view of the whole case, and in view, too, of the extent to which the parents will be likely to co-operate heartily with him in his efforts—for it is useless to direct the “ship” unless your orders are to be *promptly* and wholly complied with—let the physician give faithful directions in regard to the child's whole physical management; his food, his dress, his exercise, his sleep, his ablutions, &c. Let the physician be consulted at least once a month, at first; and let the consultation be full, free and particular. The more enlightened parents are themselves, on this subject, the more will they enjoy these visits, and the more will they profit from them; nay, more still; the more cheerfully will they afford the expense. If an ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure, in anything, it is here; and if so, it must forever be true that if there is any medical advice in the world worth paying for, it is that which bears upon the work of prevention, and assists us in giving our children the utmost vigor of physical, mental and moral constitution. If parents are bound to lay up for their children, no property can be laid up for them which will do them so much good in life as this. The saving of expense for medicine—in the prevention of future dosing and drugging—will be but an inconsiderable item of the whole gain to be derived from these early medical services.

As the child grows older, new questions will occur to the parents, and new instruction and advice will be necessary. If with the best efforts disease should not be wholly prevented—if there should be trouble from teething, from taking cold, &c., let the parents be taught the best methods of managing these complaints, *according* to

the habits and peculiarities of the child. In a child of sanguine temperament, for example, colds may need very different treatment from what they would in a child of another temperament, or of other habits. And so of all other complaints.

Much has been said within a few years, by the friends of improvement in education, about *precocity* and its evils, both to body and mind. Some, in their fears on this subject, have recommended that no scientific instruction should be given to children till they are seven or eight years of age. While we have no doubt that there are, in this respect, many mistakes made in every department of primary education, we think that the question of beginning to study earlier or later, depends, in some small degree, at least, on the child's habits, temperament, society, destination, &c.; and that here, too, great aid will be derived from judicious medical advice.

One other point is suggested by the word destination. We believe that employment, for life, is usually determined by the whim or convenience of the parent, or by accident. Now it should not be so. General usefulness, and not the convenience of the parent or anybody else, should be our aim in the education of our children. It is true, the child's taste and inclination are not to be wholly overlooked; but if early pains are taken, we may direct these nearly as we please. Here, then, precisely at this point, is great need of a physician—and that very early in life, too—in order that we may have time to guide the child's inclination in the way in which it is intended he should go.

Were it early made a grave and important question, to what employment, among the more useful employments of life, is this girl or that boy best adapted, by his native temperament and general constitution of mind and body, and were the advice which true medical wisdom, joined to

parental intelligence and impartial investigation, would dictate, to be practically regarded, we should not see so many of our females dying of consumption from breathing the bad air of factories, when they ought to have been bred to housework; nor so many of our sons dying in shops, schools and colleges, or under the weight of professional responsibilities too early assumed, when an education to agriculture or the mechanical arts would have saved them and given to them, for the benefit of the world, a long life of usefulness.

We will mention, at present, but one more particular in which much may be done to prevent dosing and drugging. It is by making it the duty of the owners of factories, the proprietors or masters of establishments, and the committees, trustees or teachers of schools of every grade, from the infant school to the university, to employ wise and judicious physicians to inspect at regular periods or otherwise, the buildings occupied by those under their care or oversight, not only to see that their inmates or pupils are not daily suffering from bad air, want of exercise, excess or want of sleep, neglect of cleanliness, neglect of due mental and moral cultivation, &c. Attention to the particular complaints of individuals could hardly be expected in these circumstances, at least in general; nor would it be desirable, as each parent, master, &c., would prefer to have this done by the physician and adviser of his family. On the diseases induced by bad air in factories, shops, &c., and on the health of school children and students, we may speak more particularly in future numbers.

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